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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Sherman Alexie will give World Touch Cultural Heritage Week keynote

Summary: A keynote presentation by novelist, poet and screenplay writer Sherman Alexie will kick off the 35th Annual World Touch Cultural Heritage Week, March 24-April 1, at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Alexie will speak at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 24, in Edson Auditorium.

(February 28, 2008)-A keynote presentation by novelist, poet and screenplay writer Sherman Alexie will kick off the 35th Annual World Touch Cultural Heritage (WTCH) Week, March 24-April 1, at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Alexie will speak at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 24, in Edson Auditorium of the campus Student Center. A reception in the Student Center's Oyate Hall Alumni Room will follow the presentation.

Alexie has been hailed as one of the best young writers of his generation. *The New Yorker* named him one of the top 20 writers for the 21st Century. A gifted orator, Alexie won the World Heavyweight Championship Poetry Bout four years in a row, from 1998 to 2001. In his lectures, he tells tales of contemporary American Indian life laced with razor-sharp humor, unsettling candor and biting wit.

A Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, Alexie grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington. He has authored 11 books of poetry, several collections of short stories, two novels and numerous works for magazines. He wrote the screenplay for and produced the feature film, "Smoke Signals," based on his book, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. The film premiered at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, winning both the Audience Award and Filmmakers Trophy. Alexie recently won the National Book Award for his latest book, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, a coming-of-age, interracial comedy for young adults based on his first year at an all-white high school.

Alexie's visit is co-sponsored by the Campus Activities Council (CAC) Convocations Committee and the Circle of Nations Indian Association (CNIA) at UMM.

WTCH Week, on the theme Making a Better World for our Children, will continue with the following events:

Bill Miller will perform at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, in Edson Auditorium. Miller has long been one of the most admired figures in the Native American music scene and beyond. Over the past four years he has produced two of his most popular albums, "Spirit Rain" and "Cedar Dream Songs," the latter winning the 2005 Grammy Award for Best Native American Recording. Miller's performance is co-sponsored by CNIA.

"Media Slander of Black Women: Why Black Men Should Protect Black Women" will be a presentation by Brenda J. Verner, Harvard University, at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 26, in Edson Auditorium. Verner is a nationally known media analyst who specializes in stereotyping research and human resource development. This event is co-sponsored by the Black Student Union. A reception will follow in the Alumni Room.

The 25th Annual CNIA 3K Peace Run will begin in front of the Multi-Ethnic Resource Center on the campus Mall at 3 p.m. Thursday, March 27 (Note date change from Tuesday).

“Echoes from the New World” will be performed by Teatro del Pueblo at 7:30 p.m. March 27 in Edson Auditorium. This 45-minute play tells the story of Latin America from the perspective of its own people. It covers the history from the Spanish Conquistadores era to the present U.S. involvement in this region. The performance is co-sponsored by The United Latinos, with a reception to follow in the Alumni Room.

The annual Invitational Ethnic Dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 28, in Oyate Hall. WTCH Week coordinator, Mike Miller, will provide the welcome and Multi-Ethic Student Program graduates will be recognized. Hilda Ladner, assistant to the chancellor for equity and diversity and MSP director, will also give remarks.

WTCH Week will continue on Saturday, March 29, with the 24th Annual CNIA Pow-wow. Grand entries will begin at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the campus P.E. Center gymnasium.

Hmong comedian Tou Ger Xiong will perform at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 1, in Oyate Hall to conclude the WTCH Week celebration. Xiong incorporates cultural diversity in his act. His visit is co-sponsored by the Asian Student Association.

WTCH Week events are open to the public.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.